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ABSTRACT

Noting that reasonableness is not to be equated with rationality but is a form of rationality, this book explores ways in which educators can help children develop the capacity to be reasonable within the context of moral development. In Chapter 1, "Reasonable Children," the concept "reasonableness" is defined in the context of morality. Chapter 2, "Aims and Goals of Moral Education," adapts the goals and objectives of the Hastings Center for teaching ethics in higher education to moral education in the schools. Chapter 3, "Philosophy for Children," maintains that the key to promoting children's reasonableness is to provide them with opportunities to develop their philosophical abilities. Chapter 4, "What Is Critical Thinking?" and Chapter 5, "Critical Thinking in the Schools," discuss the recent concern with critical thinking in education and suggest ways in which critical thinking could be linked to moral education, with special attention to science instruction. Chapters 6 through 8 address several concerns about the role of schools in enriching the moral education of children, such as moral authority, indoctrination, relativism, the church-state relationship, and the role of the family and of teachers. The theme underlying these chapters is that it is appropriate for public schools to help students develop capacities for reasonableness but that doing so calls for empowering rather than indoctrinating children. Chapter 9, "Case by Case Reasoning," discusses how empowered children might proceed on their own in ways that are mutually respectful and supportive. Chapter 10 is "Concluding Thoughts." (Contains approximately 75 references.) (KB)

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